Government would continue to purposefully pursue this matter with Pakistan.

Indians imprisoned in Pakistani Jails

†4175. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government attention has been drawn towards Roop lal Saharia who has been released recently after imprisonment of more than 25 years in Pakistani jails on the charge of spying;

(b) if so, the number of such Indians who have been imprisoned in Pakistani jails for such long time;

(c) whether Government have deliberated with the Government of Pakistan for their release; and

(d) if so, the outcome of deliberations ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) to (d) Shri Roop Lal Saharia, an Indian national, was repatriated to India on 14-4-2000 after being held for more than 25 years in Pakistani custody.

Government is in continuous contact with Pakistan through diplomatic channels for the release and repatriation of all Indian nationals including those held in Pakistani custody over long periods. Government has urged Pakistan to recognise the need to streamline and improve existing procedures relating to consular access and repatriation of each other's nationals held in custody by both countries.

Closing Down of ET&TDC Ltd.

4176. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to close down Electronics Trade & Technology Development Corporation Ltd.;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, whether Government will consider introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme fot its employees ?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) The Disinvestment Commission in its 6th report had recommended that Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation Limited should discontinue all its operations forthwith. Government is yet to take a view in the matter.

(c) Does not arise.

Checking Software Piracy and Imported Softwares

4177. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check software piracy in the country and on imported softwares; and

(b) the achievements made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) Government has taken following steps to check software piracy :

— In India, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of Software is covered under the Copyright law, violation of which attracts both fine and imprisonment.

— To create awareness, Government has been supporting Antipiracy campaign through NASSCOM and also issued instructions to various Government departments to make use of only the legal copy of the software.

— Custom duty on Software has been made zero.

— Government has introduced comprehensive Information Technology Bill in the Parliament. This Bill is expected to take care of various aspects relating to software piracy.

— Government (MHRD) has also set up a Copyright Enforcement Advisory Council.

— Organisation of seminars/workshops to create greater awareness about Copyright law among the enforcement personnel and general public.

— Encouraging setting up of collective administrative societies.

— Creation of separate cells in police headquarters.